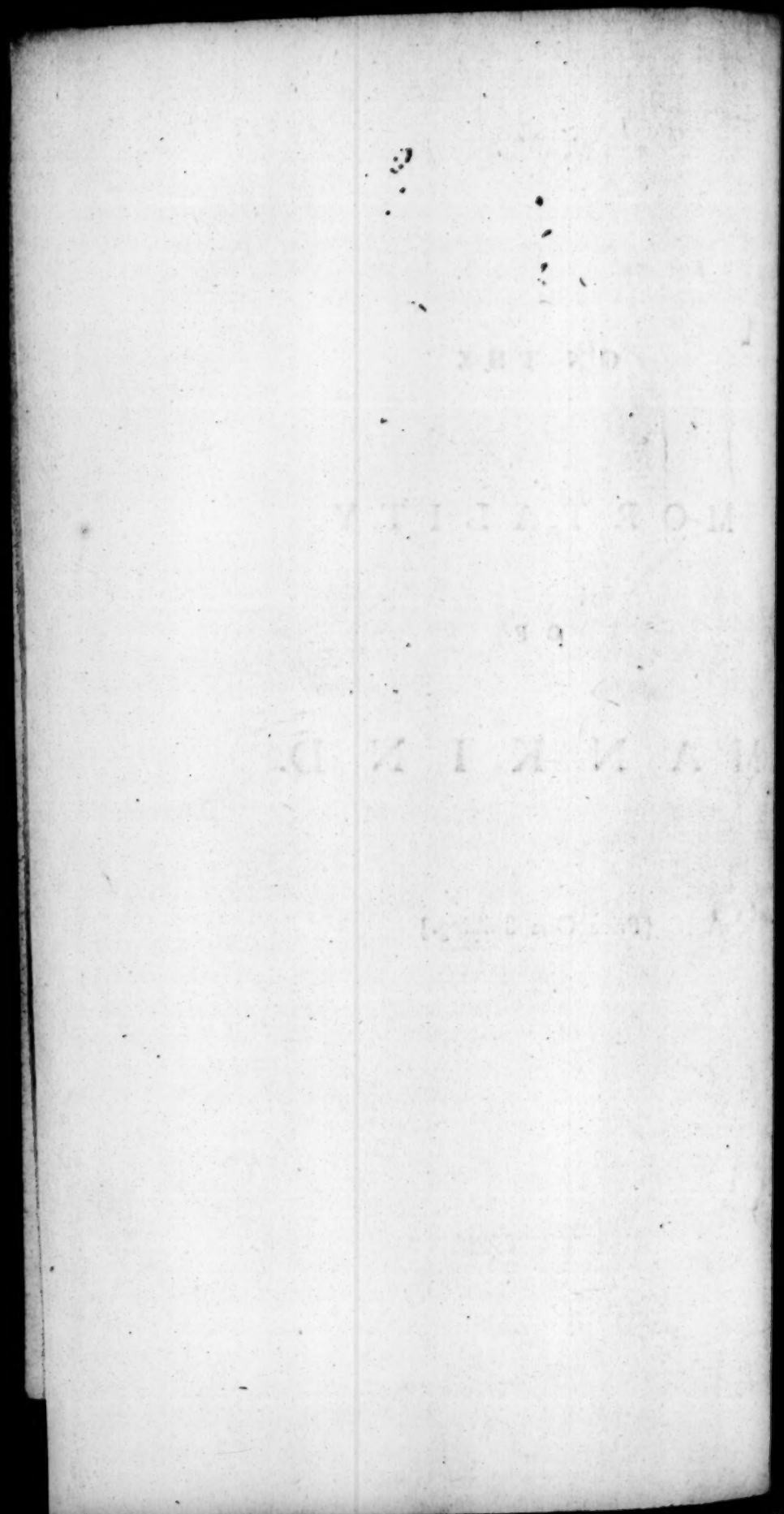


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ON THE
MORTALITY
OF
MANKIND.

[Price One Shilling.]



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T W O
S E R M O N S
O N T H E
M O R T A L I T Y
O F
M A N K I N D.

By GEORGE MARRIOTT,
Lecturer of St. LUKE'S MIDDLESEX, late
Chaplain of the BRITISH Factory at
GOTHENBURG.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E .

MORTALITY is a familiar and a beaten Subject. And I am not willing to boast of having thrown any new light upon it. Yet I have not met with any writer, who has attended sufficiently to Nature, in tracing the present Effects of that great Sentence which dooms us to Dissolution. And I have thought it very necessary to differ from most religious writers upon Death, in avoiding that style of Familiarity concerning the Passage to Futurity, which implies more Certainty than Mortals can pretend to, and which is less natural than an anxious forethought of that final Journey. The avidity with which men listen to any pretended discovery concerning Death, is a sufficient proof that they view it with considerable pain. And if I am not mistaken in my main idea, it was not intended to be viewed otherwise. The very Prospects with which we are favoured, in order to soften the rigour of it, are an additional proof of the distress which
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P R E F A C E.

is our necessary portion. If I have described the last Enemy of our nature, as in fact he is experienced, not more formidable, nor less significant, than he really is, I have not written in vain. And if the judicious reader shall candidly be of that opinion, there will be the less need of an apology for the offering which is here made to the world.

Soon will be PUBLISHED,

By the same AUTHOR,

(Being a Sequel to the present Publication)

TWO SERMONS

ON THE

FUTURE EXISTENCE

AND

PRESENT CONSOLATION

OF

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S E R M O N I.

ROMANS viii. 10.

—The Body is dead because of Sin.

LET us read the whole verse. *If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.*

For want of the adverb, *indeed*, which the translators have omitted, it seems as if the death of the body, as well as the life of the spirit, was dependent on *Christ being in us*. Which has given occasion to a misconstruction of the passage, representing the Death and the Life here spoken of, to be the *spiritual death*, and the *spiritual life*, of a good Christian in the present state. The sense would then be, not dead *because of*, or *on account of*, Sin; but dead *with respect to* Sin: which διὰ (propter) will never bear. In that case the phrase would have been, not νεκρὸν δι' ἀμαρτίαν, *dead because of Sin*, as

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it is here ; but *νεκρὸν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ*, 'dead unto Sin, as it is Chap. vi. 11. Restore however the adverb, *μὲν* (quidem) and the reading alters materially. *If Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of Sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.* i. e. the Spirit is Life, if Christ be in you, though the Body remains in a mortal state. The next verse most consistently follows. *And if the spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit which dwelleth in you.* The plain meaning of the whole is this. If you are conformed to Christ, having the spirit, or the qualities, of Christ in you, the sentence indeed of bodily death which is the punishment of Sin, is not reversed ; but the immortality of the Spirit which is the reward of Righteousness, is secured. And farther than this, if the divine spirit, which was effectual in the Resurrection of Jesus, dwelleth in you as it dwelt in him, He who raised up Jesus, will also quicken your mortal bodies, the very Bodies which were dead because of Sin, by his spirit which dwelleth in you.

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The last verse then of Chap. vi. is parallel as far as it goes. *The wages of sin is Death: but the gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

And so are the two last verses of Chap. v. *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: That as Sin hath reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Our Mortality is the most important subject in the whole compass of human reflection. Insomuch that all our investigations seem absurd, and nothing to the purpose, so long as this truth is kept out of view. Every thing besides is Impertinence to a mortal being. All the lessons we can learn will be unprofitable, 'till we shall have learned to die. And one necessary step towards learning to die, is to entertain just sentiments of Death. Which shall be the object of our present enquiry.

If the question be asked, Which of all the events that happen to mankind, is the most alarming?—the true answer is—and it carries its proof along with it—that which puts an end to their present existence. We usually enquire into the causes of events which are thought important. Nor indeed

4 ON THE MORTALITY

are we unconcerned to know the immediate cause of Death, when at any time the stroke of it has separated from Us a friend, or from the World a person of distinction. But this is not enough. We attend not sufficiently to the first, leading cause of the universal mortality. If the holy scriptures may be relied on, there is one great source of desolation. *The Body is dead because of Sin. Sin hath reigned unto Death.*

If this be true, surely the sentiments and deportment of most men are indefensible. In this, I believe, we are generally agreed—and so far we think justly enough—that our mortality is one of the most melancholy truths in the world. I mean, when it is considered as a detached truth, unqualified by certain happy discoveries, which have quite altered the nature of the subject. And notwithstanding the certainty of those discoveries, it will always be useful to consider our mortality, first in that detached view, and as a melancholy truth. Nor can those discoveries have their designed operation without it. It is necessary we should first behold with horror the dark side of the cloud. The splendours of the succeeding prospect
may

may then have a chance to produce in us humility, virtue, and gratitude to the Founder of our hopes.

That men generally think amiss concerning their mortality, is evident from the inconsistency of their conduct: which appears chiefly to be governed by the ebbs and flows of passion.

View a man first in prosperity and health. He is all levity and inattention. He hears, unaffected, reports of deaths. And he beholds, without concern, the funeral of his neighbour: because he considers not, that he himself is an heir of Mortality. Or if the thought makes entrance for a moment, it must in a moment be banished. He will not dwell on his mortality. He finds it painful, and endeavours to reassume his gaiety without delay. The art of a man of pleasure is, not to believe himself mortal; but to attend only to the present moment: or, if he looks forward at all, it is only to plan, and to anticipate, the pleasures of the morrow. Nor must he admit that his Companions, any more than himself, are mortal. The shafts of Death must lie at a distance from the pavilions of his favourites.

ON THE MORTALITY

favourites. All who tread in his brilliant circle, are invulnerable beings, made to sport, to shine, and to feast for ever. This is the essential creed of a voluptuous man.

But it is a creed, soon to be renounced. For let Sickneſs ſpread paleneſs on his cheek, or let Death ſnatch from his embraces ſome dear partner of his joys, and it is probable his ſentiments will be totally altered, and the tenor of his behaviour denote him another man. The vivacious genius is become the dulleſt of mortals. The life of company is now to be found in ſolitude. He is a ſtranger to thoſe that knew him. The votary of Pleaſure is become the ſlave of moping Melancholy, and Deſpair which reſuſes to be comforted.

What does this change prove? It proves the error of his principles. Their inſtability proves them to be falſe. The caſe is this. Men think not of their mortality, till they are woefully convinced of it. And then, having dreamt that they were Gods, they awake into wretchedneſs which is beneath the dignity of Man.

Nor do the errors of inconfiderate men ſtop here. In the miſt of their affliction, their

their passions take an unbounded course. Their sorrow is deep; their vexation is desperate; their anger is fierce; and their dejection unmanly and contemptible. What does it all end in? Will the son of Affliction become a convert to Wisdom? Will he reform the course of life which he has experienced to be vain? Will he correct the sentiments which he has found to be delusive? Reflection indeed might produce these noble effects. But uncontrouled Passion, which delights in extremes, will produce nothing but a succession of folly. Impressions wear off; new habits are acquired; fresh spirits recovered; new scenes present themselves; and, the *old man* not being *put off*, the same erroneous sentiments are revived, and the same foolish behaviour is repeated over again.

Two things are requisite to set us right. We should think frequently of our mortality; and when we think of it, we should consider it in a just light.

First, we should meditate frequently on our mortality. If we were to think more of it in general, we should be less disturbed by the thought, when melancholy circumstances

8 ON THE MORTALITY

cumstances compel us to dwell upon it. And probably we should become wise enough to make a due preparation for the event. I cannot suppose, that a man who regularly meditates on his mortality, can habitually be a bad man. But I rather think, that it is peculiar to the best of men to exercise themselves in the contemplation of death; and that they derive much of their eminence in virtue and piety from this employment. For it is highly improbable, that any earthly object will have much weight to tempt a man to sin, who is deep in the contemplation of a speedy passage from time to eternity. And it seems equally unlikely that a man should be very ambitious, or very vain, or very eager in pursuit of wealth or pleasure, or very much alarmed by any temporal disappointment, who is much accustomed to consider, that the glory of the world is transitory; and that the field of pleasure conceals Death, like a serpent, under its verdure.

But then, in the second place, it is highly necessary, that when we think on our mortality, we should consider it in a just light. If we consider it as a mere fatality, it will produce

produce no moral consequences ; nor will it admit of the smallest consolation. The Apostle will give us a true idea of it. *The Body is dead because of Sin.* It is the judicial sentence of God.

I need not go to prove, that the holy scriptures assure us of this truth. For it is not like some doctrines, here and there in few places inculcated ; but it is the uniform tenor of the sacred page. And this doctrine seems to be confirmed by several instances in the world, where Death is known to be more speedily brought on by various vices. Sin is daily seen to make slaughter of thousands ; whilst health and long life are the privileges of Virtue. Sinful passions of every sort, lust, envy, pride, malice, and revenge, enervate the body, as well as defile the soul. The excesses of the debauchee bring on a species of old-age, which is not venerable, but infamous ; and introduce the shocking paradox of a young, old man. The house of the *strange woman* leads down to the *chambers of Death*. Thus the temple of Vice is painted by Poets, very splendored in the front, but dismal and horrid

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behind :

behind : where are concealed Lazar-houses, and Sepulchres, and Shapes of misery.

The observation I mean to inculcate by this short argument, is this : that Sin appears to have brought Death into the world at first, because it hastens its approaches now ; and not only hastens its approaches, but adds to the miseries of a mortal life.

The dispensation of Death to a sinful world, we must acknowledge, is wise and just. It is fit that life should be taken away from beings who make an ill use of it. The gracious God, who creates in order to diffuse happiness, would not act consistently with himself, if he should suffer Vice and Misery to be immortal. It is easy to conceive, that this world would be a most intolerable place of residence, if men were immortal in their crimes. The lovers of Virtue have great reason to be thankful that Vice is restrained by such a punishment as death, and that the increase of misery is restrained along with it. Nor would the partizans of vice be happy in an eternity of sin. They would not only involve the righteous in their miseries, but prey upon each

each other, under the most fatal influence of cruel passions ; and the most horrid idea of Hell would be realized upon the present stage. In short, immortality would be the heaviest of curses to a sinful world. Notwithstanding all this, death is a punishment, and, like every other divine punishment, salutary.

But it may be said, Why does Death sweep away the righteous with the wicked ? And how can it be considered properly as a punishment of sin, rather than as an event which falls indiscriminately to the lot of all ?—In the first place, it is not in our power to say, how much the best of men are indebted to this severe dispensation for the virtuous dispositions and habits they have acquired. Nor are we certain that any are so pure from sin, as not to have forfeited a just claim to immortality. Among sinners, all are not equally wicked. And if sinners are not punished by death in exact proportion to their crimes, neither can it be expected that the most remote from wickedness should be exempted from the stroke : which is intended, not as a punishment proportioned to the guilt of each individual,

dual, but as a general punishment of Sin, inflicted upon a race of beings, who may be said upon the whole to be in a state of Sin : in a state, in which that moral order is subverted, without which, their happiness, as rational creatures, cannot be promoted and secured. The design therefore of the dispensation is worthy of the supreme Being. It is to bring good out of evil : it is to train up virtuous spirits in a state of discipline : it is to mark Sin with a note of divine displeasure : it is to convince the world, that virtue and happiness, vice and misery, have each their necessary, eternal, and immutable connection.

Do not suspect an inconsistency in this argument, because I say that good effects result from this penal dispensation. It may be thought, that if Death be productive of greater good than an Exemption from it, it cannot be considered as a Punishment, but the Exemption would rather have deserved the name. But how so ? Must punishment have nothing but misery in view ? Surely punishment has an end worth punishing for ; an object, in order to which it is inflicted. And a divine punishment certainly

tainly has a good end. In short, the view of punishment is, not to increase or create evil, but, by a painful operation, to lessen, prevent, and effectually remove it.

In what various ways the dispensation of death operates as a punishment, deserves next to be considered. But at present let us pause, and see if we can gather, from what has been said, any incentive to virtue which is rational and strong.

Cast an eye, then, into the world around you; and behold a diseased and dying race. How numerous are their maladies! See how they languish, and pant for life! Observe their tortures, and hearken to their groans! Expect thyself shortly, in similar circumstances, to breathe thy last. And count upon the same for every one thou lovest. Reflect then upon the malignant cause; and take fortitude. You know your enemy. *The Body is dead because of Sin.* To this cause attribute all your miseries: your horror of death; your painful anxiety to protract the date of a contemptible life; your *low-thoughted care*, as Milton calls it, with which you *strive to keep up*

a frail and feverish being. Charge on it your perplexed apprehension of uncertain death : which, because it is uncertain, is always near. To this malignant source, attribute every tear of friendship, and of humanity, over the tomb. To this attribute the full-charged bosom, and the breaking heart, with which you follow your dearest partner to the grave, or see all your hopes blasted in a breathless child. *The Body is dead because of Sin.* From the same bitter fountain trace those foul and unwholesome streams, the perplexities and terrors which respect futurity : thy dread of annihilation, or thy fears of passing to more accumulated woe. Does what I am saying, reach the ears of conscious Guilt ? Then indeed, thy most dreadful apprehensions are much too just. For the *sting of death* is in thee. Flie then, first of all, from thy course of vice. For it leads, inevitably, to destruction. And if after thy real penitence, and thy labours after virtue, the former sad prospects should return, Recollect the fatal origin of this misery, and assume new fortitude. *The Body is dead because of Sin.*
Sin

Sin hath reigned unto death. And in consequence, the timorous mortal is all his lifetime subject to bondage. The practical result is this. Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

But I will add no more—having already anticipated the outlines of the main part of the argument which is to follow.



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S E R M O N II.

ROMANS viii. 10.

—The Body is dead because of Sin.

A Dark and melancholy prospect lies before us. A prospect—(to use the words of a great Estimator of human Life) *more melancholy than that of this world before it was well clear of the Chaos, or after the wrongs and disgraces which an universal Deluge could inflict.* The great man, whose words I make use of, gave a large description of the disquietudes of mankind, without any particular view to that *King of Terrors*, which I conceive to be the principal scourge of human nature. All therefore that I shall attempt, is to trace the effects, which our mortality, as a punishment, produces, first by making human life a scene of misery; and then by conducing to final good: not without admitting as much pre-

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sent consolation, as is consistent with the idea of a Punishment.

First then, let us consider our mortality as a punishment, by taking a view of the misery which it causes.

Death, in the first place, is linked with Disease, as the cause and fore-runner of it. And what a melancholy field of description is here! What objects of Compassion! What spectacles of Horror! We may consider the whole world as an Hospital; and every mortal that breathes in it, a Patient of one class or another: either decrepid, or swoln, or ulcerous, or wasting, or tortured, or convulsed, or freezing, or burning, or moping or raging-mad. These are the common paths to Death, which usually bring us thither, if no singular calamity cuts us off by an untimely stroke. For few are there in these days, who die like the Just in the ages of patriarchal simplicity, dropping like an ear from the blade, full ripe in the autumn, yielding up the ghost without a pang, falling gently into sleep, and being *gathered to their fathers*. Death now arrests us with a violent hand; and makes us acquainted with the horror

horrors of a Prison, before the day of Execution. The world is grown more wicked; and the sentence of death is written in severer terms. We not only die, but we have a lingering, painful preparation for it. The advances to it are tedious and dreadful. So terrible is our foresight, that we may be said often to die, and have it still in reality to undergo. In short, the sentence seems to run like that of a tyrant of antiquity. *Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat.* So strike him, as that he may perceive himself to die. All our lives long we are walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Life is that valley; and we are conscious full often of the horrors of the walk. And when, under the flattering sun-shine of gaiety, we have forgotton those horrors, we pay dear for it in the first dark moment of recollection. We receive, by frequent disorders, frequent notices of our approaching dissolution. And when the last fatal warning comes, we know our doom; retreat from the world; and shut ourselves up, once for all, in the chamber of Death.

A second article, which constitutes Death a punishment, is the Horror we feel

on the apprehension of its approach. When, ever we think of the approach of death, we are apt to combine together a number of the most disagreeable ideas which can enter into the mind. First, there is the tragical parting from our friends; from those whom we love more tenderly than ourselves; from those who love Us, and who will mourn the loss of us with great sorrow and dejection; from those who need our presence and protection, and who, in our absence, will be left exposed in a friendless and wide world, *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*. Melancholy pilgrims! when their prop and staff is snatched away from them. This gives us a great horror of death. And in the next place, we tremble to think of passing from a spot and a circle which are familiar to us, to new and untried scenes, of which we can obtain no previous intelligence; to a mode of existence of which we can have no conception; or, as thousands of unfortunate mortals have unwarrantably dreaded, into nothing, or a privation of consciousness. This horror may be reckoned as part of our punishment. We have also a dreadful apprehension of the

the bodily pain, attendant upon death ; of the agony of expiring nature ; of the reluctance to part with life ; and of the earnest efforts, accompanied with a sense of their impotence, to preserve it. In short, when we think of dying, we collect, in one view, various images of distress. We consider it as a juncture, when all possessions, amusements, companions, friends, kindred, will lose their accustomed power to console, or assist, or entertain. We consider it as a cruel banishment from our native soil to an undiscovered region. And whatever is undiscovered, we dread. I know of but one single circumstance, which in general renders the sons of men willing to part with life. And that is, when they have lost their all, in their friends, the delight of their souls, whom they are desirous to follow. But how horrible then is death, when nothing can reconcile us to it, but being completely stripped, and totally bereaved of every joy of life !

Thirdly, our mortality is felt to be a punishment, by reason of our anxiety to prolong life. Our dread of death makes us anxious to lengthen out our present existence.

istence. And the less valuable our present existence may be thought, the greater seems our misery, in labouring to secure so poor a possession. But how poor soever the possession may be deemed, What will not most men give for the purchase! One man will part with his gold; another with his freedom. A third will sacrifice his friend. And a fourth will risque his reputation. *Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.* And how absurd soever, or how criminal soever it be, so powerful is the desire of life, that there are men not a few, who, in order to save it, will forfeit the favour of God; will renounce their faith; and desert the cause of truth and righteousness: being content to exchange, for a few years prosperous, or even painful duration, the hopes of an immortal and happy existence in a future state.

A fourth article, which renders Death a punishment, is the uncertainty of the time of its approach. This, indeed, may be thought a fortunate circumstance. And it may be imagined, that we are happier in having the day of death concealed from us, than we should be with a prophetic

fore-

fore-sight of our dissolution. But it is worthy of a thought, that a fore-knowledge of the time of death would be far more pleasing than uncertainty, to those who are to be privileged with length of days; and who, for want of knowing it, are as much tormented with the fear of being overtaken at an unexpected moment, as those who are marked for a speedy removal. I say, it would be pleasing to fore-know, when Death is really at a considerable distance from the youthful and the gay; when he is not to disturb them in the height of their successes; and will not remove them from the present scenes, till nature is wearied out, and they are more willing to depart than stay. And even where men are to be taken away without their consent, in those early stages of life when they have most to do and to enjoy in the world, I apprehend their uncertainty is not much less painful than a distinct fore-knowledge of the event. For as long as they know that death must come, and know not how soon, they are in fact in the same melancholy situation with him, whose time of departure is ascertained to him to be nigh. An event in prospect,

prospect, infallible in its approach, but uncertain in its time, is *always* nigh. Imagination, like the perspective glass, brings it nigher than it is. And this great misfortune attends our uncertainty: we are hindered by it (such is our folly) from preparing for death; from making the thought of it familiar; and from disarming it of its greatest terrors. And the reason is this: because we flatter ourselves, that death may yet be distant. And though we are willing to conclude so; and in consequence, to our great detriment, act upon the presumption,—yet we do not get rid of a distressing concern, lest all the while we should be dreaming on a precipice.

But in the fifth place. We feel death to be a punishment, in the grief we suffer on the loss of our friends. We suffer, not only in being mortal ourselves, but in being the companions of other mortals: many of whom die before us, and leave us to lament them. We lose sometimes a right hand.—So let me call the friend, whose presence is become at least as essential to our comfort, as the most precious limb is

our body: without whose society all things become strange. When we are thus forsaken by our long-enjoyed comforters, whose tender solaces smoothed for us the rugged path of life, mournfully do we haunt the places where we often saw them—but we find them not. We listen—such enthusiasts are we in distress, as if we expected a repetition of the never-to-be-forgotten sound:—But we hear it not. The voice of the Charmer has ceased for ever. The table wants its ornament, and the walk its visitant. Let the weary mourner retire to rest. And even then, before the closing eye will pass the firmly-impressed image of the departed. The busy imagination will grasp the phantom, and eagerly represent every wonted glance, and every accustomed attitude. Sleep, alas! was not made for the mourner.

——— *the wretched he forsakes,
swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.*

Or to what purpose should the mourner awake, to behold that light, which cannot discover to him the only object which he longs to see! The beauties of Nature, the

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modations of Art, and the supplies of Fortune, have lost their charms. Every scene is dull. The sable hangings in the houses of the great, are superfluous. We need only to see objects as they used to appear, to convince us that an essential one is absent. We may flee for fresh spirits to new scenes, and seek diversion from a succession of objects. It may succeed in time; but it is a violent force upon nature. Do we not accuse ourselves of cruelty to the memory of a friend, in striving to root it out of the mind? And when we *have* got rid of it for a time, do we congratulate ourselves upon it? Or rather, is not the fresh recollection a ground of keener and superadded pain? Inconsistent mourners that we are! Whom have we been striving to forget? Did the friend we have lost, deserve no better than to be forgotten, and forgotten intentionally too? After all the arts of oblivion, (which never can be pronounced innocent) the loss, with sensible minds, will be the prevailing thought; and full often they will look back with a sigh, and fondly wish to recall the pleasing hours which never can return. Why, oh Death! says a mourning Parent

was thy rage pointed at a harmless babe! Could not Innocence be exempt from thy fury? Why must that heart, which never entertained one purpose of deceit, be cold? Why must that cheek, which conscious guilt had never taught to blush, be pale? Or why does heaven give, determining next moment to take away? Another unhappy mortal laments, not merely over Innocence intombed, but over Excellence, over Virtue ripened to a solid maturity, cut off in the vigour of existence, the powers of the understanding in full strength, and the amiable qualities of the heart in perfect lustre: a blessing lost to the world, and an ornament lost to humanity. And though the benignity of heaven may be adored, in transplanting early very singular virtue to a soil more worthy of it, the loss is severely felt by the kindred plant, which once flourished by its side. But so it is. The most excellent virtues must yield to the power of death. *If Christ be in you*, says the apostle, i. e. if the qualities of Christ be in you, if humility, if piety, if heavenly-mindedness, if generosity, if benevolence,

and every godlike principle be in you, *the body is dead because of Sin.*

Let it be added, in the sixth place, that our mortality is felt to be a punishment, by reason of the obscurity and confusion which it causes in our reasonings about a future state of recompence. I do not mean, that our doubts are warrantable; but that our circumstances, operating on our weakness, render us liable to them. Our reasonings are just; our arguments are invincible, by arguments opposed. But passion is stronger than reason. Fear is prevalent over demonstration. The *things that are seen* have an advantage over the *things that are not seen*. Appearances are against us. And as long as we judge from appearances only, we shall be doubtful of futurity. We see *one final event happening to all. As is the good, so is the sinner. All go to one place*. Every thing beyond is concealed from us. And is not this part of our punishment? Can any thing be more melancholy than a rational being, doubting of his future existence, complaining thus in the language of Heathen-antiquity?

Alas

*Alas! the tender herbs, and flowery tribes,
Tho' crush'd by Winter's unrelenting hand,
Revive and rise when vernal Zephyrs call.
But men, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
Bloom, flourish, fade, and fall: and then
succeeds*

*A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep;
A sleep, which no propitious power dispels,
Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years.*

Nor are there wanting unhappy mortals, who, judging from the misery of the present state, question most absurdly the benignity of the divine mind, and expect a futurity of a similar sort: as if they thought it likely that the misery which prevails here, will continue on the same plan to be prevalent hereafter, rather than that, under the divine administration, a new state should be erected, to rectifie the disorders of a former. The reasoning is as bad, as the consequence is dreadful. And the wisdom of the divine government is satisfactorily explained in the Gospel: which refers us to a future Day, when all the past dispensations of Providence, mixed and chequered as they are, and parts of a grand and amazing Whole, shall be wound up to a Catastrophe. The tares and the wheat must
grow

grow together till the harvest. We justly condemn these sceptical doubts. But I instance them in, to shew the misery of mankind, under the penal sentence of mortality. Part of our punishment, as mortal beings, is to lose sight of our immortality, and to be deprived of every chearful prospect in futurity. St. Paul's exclamation expresses the sentiments of all the reflecting part of the human race. *Oh wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death !*

I come now to the latter part of this argument : which is to consider death as a punishment, by pointing out the good effects which may be ascribed to it. All punishments from God are productive of good.

I have heretofore shewn, that the dispensation of death is salutary, in preventing abundance of evil ; in restraining the course of it, after it had begun its ravages ; in short, in preventing the earth from becoming a Hell. And that we are indebted to it for divers virtuous habits and dispositions, I have also suggested. I will now make mention of some particulars. It teaches

us calmly to exercise our Reason, on the mysterious conduct of divine providence. It teaches us Fortitude, by familiarizing to us objects of terror. It teaches us Compassion, by presenting us with scenes of distress. It learns us to be patient and submissive to the will of God, as the author of Life, who, we are feelingly taught, can dispose of all the essences in the universe, at his pleasure. It lessens the power of temptation to Sin, which, by reason of the shortness of our lives, has very inconsiderable proffers to seduce us from our duty. It makes us less mindful to obey Man in preference to God; and less fearful of the mischief which Man can do us, knowing in how short a time we shall be delivered out of his hands. It restrains us from putting our Confidence in Man, who is liable to be seized and hurried into another world, at the hapless moment when his projects are within an hour of being brought to their accomplishment. It teaches us the necessity of a just dominion of Reason over the Passions and animal tendencies; the dreadful effects of which, when uncontrouled, are, by this dispensation, frequently brought to view.

view. It removes very speedily the ill effects of the most flagitious examples, by an exhibition of their tragical Exit, and passage to a more awful stage. It checks the hardy enterprizer from engaging in vast and long-sighted plans of public mischief, by presenting the danger of their falling to the ground by the same stroke, which must soon put an end to his own powers to contrive, or to execute. It teaches us the necessity of conscious virtue, to support the mind in the various seasons of distress which it occasions. It teaches us the necessity of a rational sense of the favour of God, whose constant visitation preserves our lives. And above all things, it shews us the dreadful malignity of Sin: which called down from heaven so severe a punishment on the whole human race; and wrought such pernicious havoc among the works of God: defacing the beauty, and disturbing the order, of his creation. Thus our hatred is excited against vice and impiety. And of course we are taught to reflect on the amiableness of virtue and obedience to God. How salutary we shall find this severe dispensation, in its effects in a future

future state, on condition of Christian Virtue, is beyond all conception. God has reserved, in an approaching period, a recompence for his upright servants, who feel the miseries of the present discipline, and bravely undergo its trials. The virtues which we may acquire, and have an opportunity of exercising, in this state of rigorous probation, may qualify us for a sublimer sphere than we might have been equal to in such a tranquil, easy state as would have attended the mere innocence of mankind. Evil seems to be unavoidable among imperfect creatures who are free. And it is the glorious part of the wise and good Governor of all things, to bring good out of evil, and order from confusion. And it is highly consistent with his adorable character, to make that very dispensation of death, which it was necessary to inflict upon the whole species as a punishment of sin, a ground at the same time of more exalted felicity than that which seems to have been lost, to those excellent minds, which rise superior to the trials and endurances of this humiliating state, and maintain their virtue under the pressures of mis-

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fortune. Thus, *where Sin had abounded, Grace much more abounds*. The primary transgression of our common parent, which was the inlet of all others, having involved a whole race indiscriminately in infirmity, sickness and death; and having made way for an increase of misery, in consequence of an increase of wickedness (which, having once gained an entrance, became progressive)—the holy providence of God over-ruled in wisdom to erect a constitution of Grace, which laid the foundation of more abundant happiness attainable by man, and made the dispensation of mortality itself a subservient part of the glorious design: so that the loss which we seem unfortunately to sustain, through the instrumentality of a fallen progenitor, is more than compensated by the unmerited gain, which is derived from the mediation of a *Second Adam*: a Father, not of Death, but of Immortality: who is called emphatically, the *Everlasting*, or *Immortal Father*: i. e. the Father, or Patriarch of an everlasting age, in contradistinction to the former Adam, who was the Father of a temporal age, or the Patriarch

Patriarch of a mortal life. Thus, *as by one man came Death, so by another man came the Resurrection of the dead. Where Sin had abounded, Grace did much more abound: That, as Sin had reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In the passage to which my text belongs, St. Paul distinguishes a twofold doctrine, concerning our future existence: part respecting the Immortality of the Soul, and part the Resurrection of the Body. Points of meditation, which are sufficiently interesting to deserve our study, as well as that which has at present engaged us. *If Christ be in you, first the Spirit is Life.* Christian virtue is a principle of Immortality in the Soul. The faithful Christian *never dies.* He preserves, after death, the rank and dignity of a rational, human Soul: whilst the souls of the wicked, being sunk and degraded below their original formation, are said to *die.* Nor does he suffer any blank in his existence; any pause in course of it. No sooner is his *earthly house of this tabernacle dissolved*, than he has a

building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But his happiness is progressive. It would be too much if his joys were to burst in upon him at once. The consummation of his bliss is reserved for a glorious period, which it is transport to expect. This is the second point: *the quickening of the mortal Body*: which is to be restored, vigorous, refined, splendid, angelic, and immortal. As that which is sown *is not quickened except it die*, so death is made the cause of a wonderful sublimation of our corrupt and distempered frame. We may well be content to drop it for this desirable purpose, that we may *receive our own with usury*. For the providence of God has a design, unspeakably benignant, in favour of these shattered vehicles: whether they suddenly break down in the midst of their career; or hold out, with decayed materials, to the extremity of the journey: whether they fall by a quick blow of calamity, or gradually sink in a lingering death: whether they be deposited in the solid, or in the fluid element, or in what manner soever they are disposed of, by the

the design of survivors, or the chance of things.

The representations which I have given, on this very important subject, are the fair result, first of an attention to Fact, so far as I have described the present condition of our mortality ; and then of an attention to the Doctrine of the Gospel, so far as I have accounted for the melancholy scene. It appears, that very great present consolation may be enjoyed, under the sentence of mortality. If I enter not now on a description of the Extent of that Consolation, it is because it would carry me too far in discourse, after the indulgence you have afforded me ; and because it will more properly follow, after a consideration of the future Existence of Mankind. It will then be in our power to shew, with far greater advantage, how much the rigour of our mortality is mitigated.

It follows from the whole, that Christian Virtue should be the object of our love and pursuit ; that we should submit, with calmness, cheerfulness, and fortitude, to the awful, necessary, and salutary sentence of
bodily

bodily death; and that we should endeavour, all our lives long, to obtain the advantages which may be extracted from it. And though we must feel many a bitter pang, as long as we are mortals, and sociable mortals, yet let us not fail to make our feelings subservient to the growth of wisdom and virtue: till at last, having deputed ourselves acceptably to the great God who is above us, and with the approbation of his delegate in our breasts, we may resign our breath, as becomes that heavenly philosophy which Jesus taught, without dejection, and without horror, with modest, chearful, and confidential reliance on the unchangeable benignity of that perfect and amiable Being, who first produced the universe, and perpetually presides, with unerring direction, and paternal care, over the fluctuation of all things.

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